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*782 must be the third-grade sacrifice, and a few years later, if they wish to offer a sacrifice, then it is the fifth grade. After sacrificing the twelfth grade, then it starts all over again from the first grade. The number of tables used in the sacrifice is determined by the grade number. For example, the first grade requires one table, and the third grade requires three tables. When there are not enough tables, chairs or stools may be used as substitutes. Only at the twelfth-grade sacrifice must there be three sorcerer-priests present.

The first-grade sacrifice is performed with a table set up outdoors to the east of the house, and on it placed five stacks of paper money; five bowls of wine; five pieces of tofu, each covered with a vegetable leaf; five piles of mi-pa; and one bowl of water, on which floats a spirit tablet /ling p'ai/. Behind the paper money there is a sheng measure containing rice, on which are placed the seal of the sorcerer-priest and a few coins, and a pair of candles and three sticks of incense stuck in. This is the setting of the upper altar. Under the table is a layer of rice straw, on which there are three bowls of wine, three piles of mi-pa, three stacks of paper money, a piece of tofu, again under a vegetable leaf. There is also a bowl of rice with one candle and one stick of incense stuck in. This is called the lower altar. In addition at the right or left of the table is a chair crosswise, and on it is a winnowing basket which contains a certain number of piles of mi-pa and a certain number of pieces of tofu, also covered with a leaf. Also there is a bowl of rice, in which is inserted a candle and a stick of incense and five stacks of paper money. This is called hsi-k'ung.

For the sacrifice to the Shen of the five wisdoms no animal food should be used. At the time of the sacrifice the host and the sorcerer-priest must bathe and fast and rinse out the mouth the previous day. When it is time to eat mi-pa they have to rinse the mouth again. This shen being from the east, the table has to be set up east of the house, and the sorcerer-priest, while performing the ceremony, also faces the east. The sacrifice is divided into two parts. The first part is the setting up of the altar. With his head wrapped in a red kerchief, and

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(22) Putting up an Earth Bridge

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If after a childless Miao has made a vow to the shen for a son, and still a child is not born, then the ceremony of Putting up an Earth Bridge is performed in order to make a bridge down to earth for the son in heaven, so that he can descend.

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The host selects an auspicious day and regulates his thoughts, fasts, and bathes. Before the date he prepares a stone slab about 60 cm. long, 30 cm. wide, and 5 cm. thick. Four perpendicular lines are chiseled on the slab, dividing it into five sections. He also uses five branches of a fruit-bearing tree, the size of each branch being equal to that of one section on the stone slab. On the principal day the stone slab and the tree branches are buried inside the door near the middle of the threshold. A square table is used, on which are

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Illus. 74. Sacrifice to Lu Pan.

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placed five stacks of paper money, a sheng of uncooked rice in which are stuck three sticks of incense and a pair of candles, five piles of mi-pa, a bowl of cooked tofu, and five cups of wine. There are also a